

THE NEGRO COLLEGE QUARTERLY

Vol. II

September, 1944

No. 3



THE NEGRO COLLEGE QUARTERLY is published in March, June, September, and December. The main purpose of this QUARTERLY is to offer opportunity to all persons interested in education to share such of their mature philosophy and research as may prove to be of value in the solution of the problems of higher education for Negroes. The editors of this QUARTERLY solicit contributions from all its readers.

Subscription rates: One dollar a year; single issue: 30 cents.

Entered as second-class mailing matter under the Act of August 24, 1912.

No amount of textbook cramming or lecture listening, no matter how theatrical the lecturer, can ever effect the same results as getting the student to deal with the actual materials from which the textbooks and lectures are derived (or ought to be). Also classes should be small enough to allow students to discuss thoroughly under the guidance of the teacher the contents of the books they read, the music they have heard, and the experiments they have performed. I say guidance deliberately, because undirected student discussion may appear to be democratic when in point of fact it is actually anarchic, and its results are chaotic and inconclusive. As teachers, it is our business to see to it that students come to worth-while conclusions; the classroom ought not to be an exhibition hall for displays of unregulated and misdirected talk. Under the pretext of allowing the student free and unhampered expression, lest we thwart his personality and propagandize him, the progressive educators have managed to squeeze the content of education out of education and have forced the student to turn for his affirmations to those least qualified to make them.

... For myself, I do not see what else can educate a man but an education in the liberal arts. He can be trained, he can be professionalized, he can be specialized, he can be individualized, and he can be contemporized; he cannot be educated unless he is educated in the liberal arts.

—Herbert Weisinger, Department of English, Michigan State College for Agriculture and Applied Science, "The Role of the Liberal Arts College," *The Journal of Higher Education*, 15: 247-52, May, 1944.

1 1 1

THE NEGRO COLLEGE QUARTERLY

Vol. II

September, 1944

No. 3

Editorial Note

OWING TO MAN POWER shortage in skilled labor, the printers of this magazine found it impossible to complete the publication of the June issue of the *Quarterly* on time. That issue was devoted exclusively to a symposium on the "Role of the Negro College in the Post-War World." While the article in the current issue is not a part of that symposium, it deals with a vital problem in which our colleges in the post-war world ought to be seriously interested. For this reason, we are publishing this issue simultaneously with the delayed June number.

Since the previous issue was more than double the normal size of the regular issue and since our printers are still suffering from man power shortage, this issue has only sixteen pages and does not carry many of the usual features. These will be resumed with the next issue.

The columns of this magazine will be open to any constructive criticisms which our readers would like to make on any of the articles in these two issues.

V. V. Oak

The Negro College and the Negro Veteran

MABEL M. and HUGH H. SMYTHE

I: THE PROBLEM

THE CONDITIONS WHICH confronted the Negro soldier of World War I upon his return are still too vivid in our minds for us to fail to realize the necessity for doing something now to forestall a repetition of them. It is the duty, the responsibility, and the moral obligation of the Negro college to lead the way in setting up facilities to help the veteran find himself and to facilitate his return to the pattern of normal existence.

Most of the problems faced by the Negro college in dealing with the war veteran differ only in degree from those faced by other colleges. Both must establish some definite policy as to what credit must be given for training (education or even experience) received in the army. Both must face a maturer student for whom the ordinary devices for maintaining student interest will have little meaning. This matured student will be impatient and critical of formal requirements. In many cases he will have had advanced instruction without having laid the ground work for it in accordance with prerequisites laid down in the college cata-

Dr. Hugh H. Smythe, assistant to the coordinator of the Conference of Negro Land-Grant Colleges for Cooperative Social Studies, was formerly a field research assistant with the American Youth Commission and social research analyst at Fisk University. His wife, *Dr. Mabel M. Smythe*, associate professor of economics and acting-head of the department of economics and business administration at Lincoln University in Missouri, before coming to her present position was a teacher of social sciences at Fort Valley State College. Articles by them have appeared in the *American Mercury*, the *Negro College Quarterly*, *School and Society*, *Phylon*, and several other magazines.

log; and he will resent being asked to go back over material which seems unnecessary and juvenile to him. He may dislike returning to classes among students younger than he.

Many veterans of this war will have been on their own in the world for the first time. They will have seen, in many cases, more of the world than their teachers; they will be more mature than those of the same educational status. After seeing death and battle, much of the traditional curriculum will seem tame if not actually silly. Old restrictions on social actions are likely to appear outrageously narrow-minded. Having been their own bosses, in a sense, they may no longer respect age for age's sake—many have ordered around older men who held lower ranks. Many have gained higher positions in the armed services than they knew before and are not equipped to take as high a place on their return. All of these elements make it necessary to consider the veteran as a special case rather than as one to be dealt with along routine lines.

The establishment of some agency, board, or committee as an integral part of the general administrative organization of the college to handle the case of the returning veteran is an excellent innovation. All veterans enrolled in the institution would become wards of this unit, which would concern itself with such problems as determining the amount of credit to give the veteran for his military experience and training, fitting the veteran into a civilian environment, ascertaining whether the individual had any prior formal education and evaluating it, guiding selection of vocations, determining the disposal of cases where the veteran has failed to measure up to prescribed standards, and the like. Under the leadership of this body, the entire faculty would work in cooperation.

Since veterans who have not the qualifications to enter college will have an opportunity for government-financed education, we may expect an increase in the number of so-called special students after the war—those students who are not candidates for a degree, but who come to college to obtain training aside

from formal degree requirements. It may be expected that some Negro colleges will attempt to attract such government-subsidized students because of their financial status, regardless of their ability to satisfy the needs of the students.

As plans for their education are being perfected, it should be kept in mind that the armed services are developing a comprehensive program of vocational and other counseling. It can be assumed, then, that the returning soldier will be in a position to assist in the wise selection of those things which will best help him to return to society, and it is the responsibility of the colleges to be prepared to use his aid. In doing this our schools should recognize the Negro's occupational limitations and prepare him to offset such restrictions, as well as to teach him the attitudes, habits, and skills which will enable him to fit into our complex and ever-changing social milieu with a minimum of lost effort and motion.

A practical attitude must be taken by our colleges in the attempt to meet these coming conditions. Our schools must develop now a concrete and realistic solution. They must plan to provide technical training for many who would not normally attend college. This is not merely a matter of teaching vocational courses, for this may be done—and has been done—and yet the institution may fail in its responsibility. It must assemble its personnel and correlate its facilities in such a way as to provide a functional system of vocational instruction.

In providing this, emphasis on terminal courses will not be misplaced. The revised curriculum should include courses that will prepare not the usual "professional" persons that we have been grinding out of our colleges to enter the teaching field for the most part, but personnel trained as technicians.

Courses in business must be devoted to giving instruction in the actual operation of a successful small enterprise, which some of the veterans will probably undertake with the "nest egg" provided them upon discharge. Basic accounting, which will include information on how to finance a small business; fundamentals

of management for small organizations; and primary instruction in personnel administration, which will give some consideration also to elements of public contact and the development of good will, should be instituted.

In the trades we must not be caught short again; we must not find ourselves with opportunities to enter work areas formerly denied to us but unable to take advantage of them because of lack of qualified individuals. Instruction in foundation courses—and some more advanced as the need warrants—in radio, aviation, and communication must be offered. Some of the returning soldiers have acquired a knowledge of these fields from their army duty and will have the inclination to want to stay in them. Yet, we must face the fact that Negro colleges cannot possibly offer training in these fields, except on a limited scale, for a long time, partly because of difficulty in obtaining competent instructors. It should be their function to offer guidance to the veteran in selecting the best institutions giving this training. The Negro college might still offer its guidance in helping him to obtain employment, since the regional placement bureaus referred to below should be working closely with aviation, radio, and communication industries to get them to place these veterans who will be qualified to take and hold such jobs.

There are other branches of service long neglected that will help to absorb the Negro veteran and afford him useful and dignified occupations, if he is trained and ready. With the great housing program, both public and private, that is sure to develop as a result of the extended hiatus on home building and general construction due to the war, our institutions should plan courses to prepare individuals as stationary engineers, technically skilled maintenance men, landscape architects, and the like. Pre-war public housing revealed the need in this area of work, and our colleges can demonstrate their social usefulness by a realistic approach in this direction.

Finally, although it will of necessity have to be on a small scale in the beginning, the vocational curriculum, along with

the natural sciences, should include some basic technical training to acquaint our students with the job possibilities arising from recent discoveries and developments in plastics, alloys, and metals. This should be done so that nothing in our society will be unknown to our students, and they will be prepared, even if not extensively, to move into such work when the chance comes.

While doing all of this, the traditional offerings in vocational education should be reviewed, and those customary courses found to be non useful should be eliminated; those found still to be of value must be reconstructed in terms of current and future needs. As far as possible, every area should include a period of "out-service" training. This will balance the institutional work and provide on-the-job experience for which there can be no substitute.

II: TRAINING FOR SOCIAL LIVING

Unlike other colleges, the Negro institution must face the question of the position of the Negro in the American social order. American colleges must serve the American student, but the Negro college in the United States must also point its work to meet the requirements of a group of people who are members of the American public but only partly integrated into the normal stream of American society. Many veterans, as well as other post-war students, will want more than the skeletal terminal courses; it is with these that training for social living can be fullest. To this end, the college must shape its liberal arts curriculum to provide the most practical and most useful courses helpful toward the development of a "social sense" in the veteran. These courses must be presented and offered in a manner to appeal to the new type of student the veteran will be, and to impart the fundamental techniques of citizenship through revitalized and practical social studies. This will entail showing him his *present* place, his *real* position, and his *ideal* role in American life. Doing this will enable the Negro veteran to understand fully and to experience in reality the true purpose of education: the art of

living by getting the fullest measure of satisfaction out of a life which measured by any standard shows beneficial contributions made for the good of society as a whole.

To aid the veteran in achieving this social sense we must look into our social science curriculum and see whether the current offerings are adequate to do the necessary job. No doubt it will be found that much of the usual social studies program is devoted to non-realistic, non-essential, and non-functional academic material. That is, the theoretical fields have been covered extensively while the practical areas have lagged or are entirely wanting. To remedy this condition we must bring our subjects down to earth. In anthropology the course should be of such a nature as to include a thorough but concise picture of man and his cultural past, yet the major emphasis should be on rooting out the current incorrect information concerning all groups of humanity and the understanding of the methods of factually evaluating group contribution to the enrichment of world culture. This should be done not in the usual lecture fashion but might involve practical participation through testing and mingling with various groups of people, through interchange with nearby non-Negro institutions, and by contacting the various educational and other offices representing national groups in this country—the Pan-American Union for Latin-America, and others directed to us by the various diplomatic authorities.

Most of our colleges lack but sorely need a course in contemporary society that is pointed towards inculcating information relative to current and future trends. This would instruct the student in the techniques of social progress and how to use them to advantage. It would stress drilling in societal psychology to teach control methods in handling day-to-day incidents encountered as one moves in a white dominated world.

Along with this could be tied in a course concerning the Negro in American life today. Such material would meet practical needs and remove the veneer of unreality that our colleges consciously or unconsciously spread over students. It would fac-

tually portray our case: lowest in economic position, socially existing in a real caste structure, and virtually the same in all parts of the nation in every respect.

Rather than the long list of foundation and related courses in political science, a well-rounded, practical course in government should be given. This course would consider the important events in the political history of our government but would stress particularly how the government today effects the Negro. The application of laws to the Negro and his other fellow-citizens would be studied; visits to courts would have a regular place on the calendar, that he might understand the treatment Negroes receive in comparison with that accorded other groups. Some out-service experience in governmental bureaus—local, state, and national—would be included. Ways of securing the exercise of the franchise, especially in those sections where it has been denied, would be taught. The course would then be one in real government instead of a purely theoretical understanding of it.

To round off this social development, a general course in cultural appreciation should be instituted. This would give a broad view of American society and its contribution to international progress and world culture. However, the central thesis of such instruction would be dedicated to teaching the appreciation of those elements of living—music, art, literature—which in the finer sense are little understood and accepted in their true form by the great majority. This course would bring the fine arts and the humanities down out of the clouds and set them down on solid ground, that the masses might participate and see how much a seemingly intangible part of our civilization has value for us all. To do this, we must do away with much of the ordinary class-room work and stress more attendance at cultural functions. Students would regularly attend concerts of all types of music in the surrounding community, as well as on the campus. Another period would be given over to using art materials and understanding the role and function of painting and sculpture. Demonstrated lectures in literature and languages would form

an integral part of the work—visual and auditory materials could be employed in this capacity and thus do away with much of the dullness that accompanies language and literature courses as at present.

Improvement in courses is not enough. A substantial part of the veteran's social training, particularly where he is enrolled in a terminal course, will be achieved in out-of-class activities and in general campus life. It is to be understood that in all of the above the emphasis should be on participation by the student. There should be informal discussion groups from which should develop cultural appreciation, a sense of citizenship, and knowledge of the use of social organization to obtain justice and economic advancement. This type of instruction and training should appeal to the veteran who will probably abhor overemphasis on indoor formal education.

While achieving this, the Negro college has the responsibility not only of keeping alive within the veteran the desire to advance himself but also of continually stimulating him to gain knowledge which will enable him to make a contribution to the progressive reconstruction of America and to the world in general. The college must employ a carefully selected faculty with realistic attitudes and wide experience, together with an interest in making a well-rounded citizen and person of the student. Political science teachers must know the technique of intelligent voting: how to evaluate candidates and the whys and wherefores of registration and balloting. Economics teachers must be able to help him select insurance, budget his income, and invest or spend wisely his mustering out pay. English teachers must be able to assist him handle business correspondence; hygiene teachers must know how he should care for his body.

Besides this, the area which he selects for making a living must give him training to face a real world. It will not help him to know how to landscape the plains of Kansas if he is to be employed as a landscape gardener in hilly Virginia. Nor will it help the returned WAC to learn to cook only on an electric stove

with automatically controlled heat and humidity, if the real world offers her a wood range. Training for the veteran must include sufficient variety to enable him to adapt himself to less controlled conditions. This is a big order, but it must be done.

III: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The Negro college, even more than its white counterpart, must make the relation between education and employment a close and solid one. The college must keep a finger on the pulse of the developments and needs of Negro business and education, so as to prepare the veteran to take his place as a productive member of society. If the college improves its placement procedures, there will be less delay between education and work, and a resulting higher level of morale for the returned soldier. We must face the fact that the Negro veteran will find job-hunting much harder than his white fellow-veteran, and our preparations to help him along this line should be correspondingly greater.

The college must seek and maintain contacts not only with public school systems in the state and perhaps nearby states, but with civil service, business establishments, and any other conceivable prospective employer. In schools with trade departments the latter will include farmers, contractors, and independent artisans of all kinds, in addition to those named above.

Placement personnel should be carefully selected for their ability to make and hold contacts and to choose among available job-seekers. They should not assign to each vacancy the first four or five to apply, but should honestly try to fill qualifications. It is best to admit the deficiencies of poorly qualified graduates, or contacts may be destroyed. Placement workers should advise the faculty as to *standards* of work (to assure suitability for employment), and as to necessary training for various jobs, so that graduates will not find themselves two or three hours short of qualifications for a particular job—as in civil service. It is of great importance that the line of least resistance should not be adopted and all applicants sent into teaching. This means that

there should be a vocational guidance program under the direction of trained personnel. If such individuals are not available, it would be profitable for the college to finance their training, if necessary.

A research unit for keeping up with job opportunities, trends in educational demands, and the like should be established. The old hit-or-miss policy will be no good after the war with ten to sixteen million job-seekers in the country. Such a bureau would help give all offerings direction—faculty and administration should know at all times *why* everything is being taught. And it would follow up placements in order to judge relative success or failure and thus be in a position to suggest means of improvement.

To make more effective our placement practices and procedures we shall have to provide a better means than now exists in our schools. At best each institutional employment office can succeed in getting jobs for only a few of its graduates, and these have been mainly teaching positions. A small college, providing only a handful of graduates in each of several vocational fields, can hardly maintain efficient connections with prospective employers whose needs may be spasmodic and unpredictable. Such employers are likely to go to the better known employment services. If we are to meet such needs and to enter other areas of employment on any appreciable scale—since the teaching profession has been glutted for some time and the returning veteran will not be prepared nor probably want to prepare for such a task—this plan must be sufficient in scope and function to do a real job.

Regional employment centers are badly needed for placement work covering the colleges in each area. These centers would work on a cooperative basis, forgetting individual alumni success in the larger interest of the advancement and welfare of the Negro group as a whole and the veteran in particular. These centers might be located as follows: Durham, serving schools in North Carolina, South Carolina and southern Virginia; Wash-

ington, D.C., to service institutions in the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware and northern Virginia; Cleveland, to act as an outlet for schools in Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia and Missouri; Nashville, to serve as a clearing house for colleges in Tennessee, Louisiana and Mississippi; Atlanta, to handle the work of schools in Georgia, Florida, Alabama; and Houston, to be a center for institutions in Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

The upkeep of each central bureau would be the responsibility of the several schools in the area served. Each school would contribute a proportionate amount of funds for its maintenance, and would likewise have a voice in its administration, as well as in its employment practices and policies.

Such bureaus would be highly organized and operated on a large-scale basis. They would contact and cooperate with the various agencies interested in and operated on the behalf of the veteran. By working in close relationship with the United States Employment Service, the Veterans Administration, state veterans administrations, and the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled Veterans of America, and similar organizations, guidance and counsel as well as material assistance could be had. These agencies should prove of inestimable value to these centers in their attempt to set up a workable and useful program, and to aid the Negro veteran in securing a job, both immediately upon his return and after his training.

In every area of endeavor the Negro college must begin now to make the necessary changes in its educational program to comply with the needs of the Negro veteran. It must develop intensive, purposeful and practical terminal courses in areas of learning in which investigation shows there is to be the greatest demand. It must accept terminal education as a valuable area of usefulness in our colleges. It must see that it serves a real need and is not instituted mainly to get money Uncle Sam is to spend on education, for terminal training is important in orientating

those who know no skills and have neither the time nor the inclination to take a full college course.

The Negro college must realize that the Negro has entered industrial fields hitherto closed to him, and that the obligation of the schools is to see that individuals are trained in the right areas and in sufficient numbers to hold these gains; the returning veteran is the logical trainee for this purpose. It must provide practical training in business, not only for the businesses traditionally engaged in by Negroes, but also with a broad outlook toward developing Negro personnel capable of filling any niche in the world of industry and commerce.

We must not be content to produce half-baked typists, accountants, bookkeepers, insurance salesmen, and would-be proprietors of small "joints." We must encourage the growth of personnel managers, competent secretaries, auditors, actuaries, skilled machinists, "ad" writers, journalists, and proprietors of clothing stores, poultry stores, real estate agencies, laundries, and a variety of other enterprises. Beauty shops, insurance establishments, mortuaries, and eating places need less encouragement, but we might help those inclined in these directions to do business on a better footing than is now customary.

IV: THE OUTLOOK

To present anything like the program outlined above, a college must have three major requisites: a competent faculty, adequate and suitable equipment, and a good-sized student body. On all three counts the majority of our colleges must be eliminated. They have small, poorly paid, and often poorly trained faculties; little or no equipment of the kinds needed for real training in many of the areas offered; and so few students as to make it uneconomical to offer a variety of courses.

The ramifications of these broad problems are too great for us to consider detailed remedies here, but the signposts are obvious: Negro colleges need consolidation, where there is unnecessary duplication of facilities; specialization, where they are fitted

to serve in one area but not in all; and cooperation in planning and execution of programs. Until they combine faculties, equipment, libraries, and resources, we shall have many small institutions doing nothing well.

To meet the needs of the immediate future, and particularly those that affect the Negro veteran, the Negro college must take steps in the directions indicated. Each must frankly recognize its own limitations and rededicate itself to serving the best interest of its students, even when this means advising the student to go elsewhere for necessary training. The problem is one that can be solved and within a comparatively short time. We must realize that the Negro veteran in this war is giving everything asked of him that a brighter and better future will result for all men. It is the duty of the Negro college to plan to meet its obligation to do its part toward the realization of the hopes and aspirations of our veterans, to show them by performance that it can and will meet the demands put upon it and that it will offer them a means of achieving a place of work and dignity, and a position of complete integration in the American and world social order.

THE NEGRO COLLEGE QUARTERLY

Vol. II

December, 1944

No. 4



The Negro College Quarterly is published in March, June, September, and December by Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, Ohio. The main purpose of this *Quarterly* is to offer opportunity to all persons interested in education to share such of their mature philosophy and research as may prove to be of value in the solution of the problems of higher education for Negroes. The editors of this *Quarterly* solicit contributions from all its readers.

1 1 1

Subscription rates: One dollar a year; single issue: thirty cents

Entered as second-class mailing matter under the Act of August 24, 1912.

Surely the time now demands—not that we should find room in our papers for stories of atrocities committed by Germans and Japanese, while comparatively ignoring those of which we ourselves are guilty—not that we should condemn the taking of other people's land by Germans, Italians, and Japanese, while excusing in ourselves the same crime; but rather that we should look for the causes of this state of mind which has made Italian fascism possible, which has made Japan's mad desperation possible; and, if the causes are in any way due to faults of ours, try to remove the causes by trying to undo the evil we have done.

—ANNA MELISSA GRAVES in
"I Have Tried to Think"
and Other Papers.